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## The Second Epistle of Paul to the Thessalonians

### Background

The church at Thessalonica had just received their first letter from the Apostle Paul and had become confused about the return of the Lord. (1 Thess. 5:1-8) Paul was prompted to write 2 Thessalonians to clear up some misunderstandings about the “Day of the Lord” and the “Return of the Lord.”

- Because of the great persecution of the saints at Thessalonica, some thought that the rapture had come and they were experiencing the tribulation
- Some thought that the rapture was so imminent that they should quit their jobs and wait for His return

### **I. Introduction (1:1-2)**

#### **A.** Greeting (vs. 1)

- 1.** From: Paul, Silas & Timothy
- 2.** To: The Church at Thessalonica
- 3.** Heavenly Address: The church . . . in God our Father & the Lord Jesus Christ (John 15:1-8)

#### **B.** Grace and Peace from God (vs. 2)

### **II. Comfort in Affliction (1:3-12)**

#### **A.** Prayer of Thanksgiving (vs. 3)

Desire to pray – bound, obligated, desire

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## B. Praise for the church members (vs. 3-4)

### 1. Faith that was growing and maturing

a) Growth is evidence of life

b) Faith is increased by the power of the Word of God

**Romans 10:17** So then faith *cometh* by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

### 2. Love

a) Each one demonstrated love for one another

b) This love continued and increased (abounded – overflowing)

### 3. Patience

a) Endurance in physical persecution

b) Steadfast in personal affliction and pressure

**Romans 5:3** And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience;

**James 1:3-4** Knowing *this*, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. But let patience have *her* perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing.

**2 Corinthians 4:17** For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding *and* eternal weight of glory;

### 4. Faithfulness – constancy

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## C. Promises of God's Judgment (vs. 5-10)

Persecution and trials are evidence of the justice of God (We tend to think that suffering proves that God does not care about us)

**Philippians 1:29** For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake;

### 1. Reason for Suffering (vs. 5)

a) Their suffering did not earn them a place in heaven

b) God promises rewards at the Judgment Seat of Christ for the saints in preparation for His kingdom (Kingdom of God will be fulfilled when Christ reigns here on this earth)

**Matthew 5:10-12** Blessed *are* they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are ye, when *men* shall revile you, and persecute *you*, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great *is* your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you.

**James 1:12** Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him.

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2. Recompense – render, repay (vs. 6)
- a) God will penalize those who bring persecution (maybe not in this life)
  - b) All unbelievers will be judged at the Great White Throne Judgment
- Revelation 20:11-15**

## God's Judgments

### The Judgment of sin

**Romans 6:23** For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

**Romans 8:1** *There is* therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.

### The Judgment of saints

~He judges us as sons

**Hebrews 12:6** For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth.

**1 John 1:9** If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us *our* sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

*Sin has to do with what we are*  
*Sins have to do with what we do*

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~He judges us as servants

**Romans 14:10** But why dost thou judge thy brother? or why dost thou set at nought thy brother? for we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ.

**2 Corinthians 5:10** For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things *done* in *his* body, according to that he hath done, whether *it be* good or bad.

## The Judgment of nation-states

God will judge the nations who are against His people, the Jews, during the Great Tribulation

## The Judgment of sinners

**Revelation 20:15** And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.

## The Judgment of Satan

**Revelation 20:10** And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet *are*, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever.

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3. Rest – relief, relaxation (vs. 7)
  - a) Rest – relief from being stretched, loosened
  - b) Day He will be revealed – Rapture
4. Retribution – punishment (vs. 8-9)
  - a) Who will be punished
    - (1) Those who know not God
    - (2) Those who do not obey His gospel
  - b) What will their punishment be
    - (1) Everlasting destruction (death)
    - (2) Eternal separation from God
5. Reward (vs. 10)
  - a) The saved will glorify Christ when He returns
  - b) The saved will marvel (show admiration, wonder) at His coming

## D. Prayer for the church members (vs. 11-12)

1. Prayer that they would be worthy of their calling (vs. 5, 11)

Trials do not make a person – they reveal what a person is made of. When our faith is tried, we are revealing our worth

**1 Peter 1:6-7** Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations: That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ:

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**2.** Prayer that God would complete (finish) His purposes (vs. 11)

**3.** Prayer that Christ would be glorified (vs. 12)

**a)** Lord – His sovereign name, owner  
(John 13:13)

**b)** Jesus – His saving name, Savior  
(Matthew 1:21)

**(1)** His character (Colossians 3:17)

**(2)** His cross (John 19:19)

**(3)** His concern (1 Timothy 2:5; 1 John 2:1)

**(4)** His coming (Acts 1:11)

**(5)** His coronation (Philippians 2:9-11)

**c)** Christ – His sufficient name

**(1)** Prophet (John 7:46)

**(2)** Priest (Hebrews 7:1-8:6)

**(3)** King (John 14:1-3; Revelation 1:7)

~Lord emphasizes His power

~Jesus emphasizes His person

~Christ emphasized His position

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## III. Explanation Regarding the Day of the Lord (2:1-12)

**A.** Paul's request – I beseech you (vs. 1)

*Remember my former teaching*

(1 Thessalonians 4:13-18)

1. Coming of our Lord
2. Gathering together

We shall meet the Lord in the air

**B.** Paul's reassurance (vs. 2)

*We did not miss the rapture*

1. Not shaken – not disturbed or confused

2. Not troubled – not frightened, don't cry

**a)** In spirit – prophetic prediction

**1 John 4:1** Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world.

**b)** In word – incorrect teaching from a false teacher

**c)** In letter – deceptive letter that claimed that the day of Christ had come

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## The Day of Christ

*The “day of Christ” primarily refers to the rapture of the church on a specific day*

### Examples

**Philippians 1:6** Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform *it* until the day of Jesus Christ:

**Philippians 1:10** That ye may approve things that are excellent; that ye may be sincere and without offence till the day of Christ;

**Philippians 2:16** Holding forth the word of life; that I may rejoice in the day of Christ, that I have not run in vain, neither laboured in vain.

**1 Corinthians 1:8** Who shall also confirm you unto the end, *that ye may be* blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.

### Exception

**2 Thessalonians 2:1-2** Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and *by* our gathering together unto him, That ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand.

(The day of Christ in verse 2 refers to the gathering together that is mentioned in verse 1. The events described in later verses all refer to the day of the Lord (time period beginning at the Rapture and continuing through the Tribulation and the Millennium)

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## The Day of the Lord

- The “day of the Lord” does not refer to a particular day, but a specific time period
- Reference to the “day of the Lord” is frequently mentioned in the Old Testament (Isaiah 13:6, 9; Joel 2:1-2, 31-32; 3:14; Zephaniah 1:14-15)
- The “day of the Lord” has been referred to as “the day of wrath,” “the day of trouble,” (Zephaniah 1:15) “the time of Jacob’s trouble” (Jeremiah 30:7) “the beginning of sorrows” (Jeremiah 30:6; Matthew 24:8; 1 Thessalonians 5:3)
- The “day of the Lord” begins after the Rapture of the church, and encompasses the 7 years of tribulation and continues until the end of the Millennium
- The “day of the Lord” is primarily a time of God’s judgment of the world and punishment of nations

**Rapture** – 1 Thess. 4:13-18; 1 Corinthians 15:51-52

**Tribulation** – Revelation 4-19

**Millennium** – Revelation 20

**New Heaven and Earth** – Revelation 21-22

**Rapture** – **Tribulation** – **Millennium** – **Eternity**  
(Imminent)            (7 years)            (1,000 years)            (Forever)

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## C. Paul's reasoning (vs. 3-4) (**Defiance**)

1. Falling away, apostasy, separation
  - a) Physical departure from the earth  
Rapture of the saints
  - b) Theological departure from the faith  
Global rebellion against Christ
2. Man revealed – antichrist
  - a) Man of sin
  - b) Son of perdition, destruction, ruin  
**1 John 2:22** Who is a liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist, that denieth the Father and the Son.
  - c) Opposition, adversary
  - d) Exalteth himself above God
  - e) Worshipped as God
  - f) Sitteth in the temple of God
  - g) Demonstrating that he is God

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## The Antichrist

### 1. He will be a peacemaker

**Revelation 6:2** And I saw, and behold a white horse: and he that sat on him had a bow; and a crown was given unto him: and he went forth conquering, and to conquer.

**Revelation 17:12-13** And the ten horns which thou sawest are ten kings, which have received no kingdom as yet; but receive power as kings one hour with the beast. These have one mind, and shall give their power and strength unto the beast.

### 2. He will be a protector

**Daniel 9:24-27** Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most Holy. Know therefore and understand, *that* from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince *shall be* seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks: the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times. And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself: and the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary; and the end thereof *shall be* with a flood, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined.

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## 3. He will be a peace-breaker

**Daniel 9:27** And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week: and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make *it* desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate.

## 4. He will be a persecutor

**Revelation 13:15-17** And he had power to give life unto the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak, and cause that as many as would not worship the image of the beast should be killed. And he causeth all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads: And that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name.

## 5. He will be a prisoner

**Revelation 19:19-20** And I saw the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against him that sat on the horse, and against his army. And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone.

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3. Paul's reminders (vs. 5)
  - a) I was with you in person
  - b) I taught you these things
4. The Holy Spirit restraining (vs. 6-7) **(Delay)**
  - a) What is holding back the revealing of the antichrist? (withholdeth)
  - b) That which is hidden (mystery of iniquity) God the Spirit has indeed restrained some of Satan's power and wickedness (Genesis 6:3)
  - c) He who letteth (withholdeth) Holy Spirit indwelling believers
  - d) Until he be taken out of the way  
The rapture of the church
5. The Return of Christ (vs. 8-9) **(Destruction)**
  - a) Judgment of Antichrist
    - (1) Consumed with the breath of His mouth
    - (2) Destroyed with His appearance
  - b) Antichrist the imitator
    - (1) Imitation of Christ's coming
    - (2) Imitation of Christ's power
    - (3) Imitation of Christ's miracles (signs)
    - (4) Imitation of Christ's wonders (amazement)
6. Those who Remain (vs. 10-12) **(Delusion)**
  - a) Deception, lies
    - (1) They will perish

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- (2) They received not the truth of salvation
- b) Delusion, errors
  - (1) They will believe the lie that Antichrist is God
  - (2) They will believe the lie that man does not need God (Romans 1:25)
- c) Damnation
  - (1) Believed not the truth
  - (2) Had pleasure in unrighteousness

## IV. Encouragement Regarding their Salvation (2:13-17)

### A. Their salvation (vs. 13-14)

- 1. God's love for them
- 2. God's protection

God chose them to be saved from the Tribulation and Antichrist because of their sanctification (set apart for service) and belief in the truth (salvation by faith)

### 3. God's calling

To receive the blessings of Christ

### B. Their duty (vs. 15)

- 1. Stand fast – stand firm
- 2. Hold the traditions – that which you have been taught (The Word of God)
  - a) What you have heard
  - b) What you have read

*It is easier to hold something when you are standing still*

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## **C. Their Savior (vs. 16-17)**

God the Father, Jesus, Comforter

- 1.** Who loved them
- 2.** Who comforted them (consolation)  
Everlasting
- 3.** Who gave them confidence (hope)  
Through grace (kindness)
- 4.** Who confirmed their actions
  - a)** Their words
  - b)** Their works

## **V. Exhortation to Continue On (3:1-15)**

### **A. Their responsibilities (vs. 1-2)**

- 1.** Prayer for the message
  - a)** Spread swiftly without hindrances
  - b)** Accepted by others
- 2.** Prayer for the messengers
  - a)** Protection from harm
  - b)** Protection from wicked men

### **B. Their confidence (vs. 3-5)**

- 1.** God's faithfulness
  - a)** He would strengthen them
  - b)** He would keep them from evil
  - c)** He would help them do right
- 2.** God's direction
  - a)** To love God
  - b)** To wait patiently for His coming

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## VI. Problems in the Church (vs. 6-15)

- A.** What about these who are out of line? (vs. 6)
  - 1.** Withdraw from the disorderly (deviating from the order; out of rank)
  - 2.** Withdraw from them who are not following the instruction given from the Word
- B.** You know how you should be acting (vs. 7-10)
  - 1.** Orderliness – keeping rank
  - 2.** Diligence – they worked hard and paid their own expenses
  - 3.** Motivation – to be a godly example for them to follow
  - 4.** Responsibly – those who do not work should not eat
- C.** Who are you talking about specifically? (vs. 11)
  - 1.** Disorderly – out of order, not working
  - 2.** Busybodies – busy but fooling around, concerned with others' business and not own
- D.** What is the first step toward correcting the situation? (vs. 12)
  - 1.** Work in quietness (minding their own business)
  - 2.** Eat their own bread
- E.** Caution to the believers (vs. 13)

Do not become discouraged by others who are not working hard
- F.** What if they still won't listen? (vs. 14-15)
  - 1.** Have no company with them
  - 2.** Treat him not as an enemy but warn him as a brother

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## When to Consider Church Discipline

### 1. Personal differences between Christians

**Matthew 18:15-17** Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. But if he will not hear *thee*, *then* take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell *it* unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican.

**Philippians 4:2** I beseech Euodias, and beseech Syntyche, that they be of the same mind in the Lord.

### 2. Doctrinal Error

**2 John 1:9-10** Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son. If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, **receive him not** into *your* house, neither bid him God speed:

**Romans 16:17-18** Now I beseech you, brethren, **mark them** which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them. For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple.

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## 3. Believers overtaken in sin

**Galatians 6:1** Brethren, if a man be **overtaken** in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted.

## 4. Repeated troublemakers

*Opinionated people who separate themselves because of pride and selfishness*

**Titus 3:9-11** But avoid foolish questions, and genealogies, and contentions, and strivings about the law; for they are unprofitable and vain. A man that is an **heretick** after the first and second admonition reject; Knowing that he that is such is subverted, and sinneth, being condemned of himself.

## 5. Open Immorality

**1 Corinthians 5:1** It is reported commonly *that there is fornication* among you, and such fornication as is not so much as named among the Gentiles, that one should have his father's wife.

**1 Corinthians 5:5-7** To deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus. Your glorying is not good. Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump? **Purge out** therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us:

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**1 Corinthians 5:11** But now I have written unto you not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such an one no not to eat.

**2 Corinthians 2:6-8** Sufficient to such a man is this punishment, which *was inflicted* of many. So that contrariwise ye *ought* rather to **forgive** *him*, and comfort *him*, lest perhaps such a one should be swallowed up with overmuch sorrow. Wherefore I beseech you that ye would confirm *your* love toward him.

## VII. Conclusion (3:16-18)

**A.** Paul's closing prayer (vs. 16)

He wanted them to have peace

**B.** Paul's precaution (vs. 17)

He signed his own name so that they would not doubt the author

**C.** Paul's closing remarks (vs. 18)